Technical Bulletin
Forest Health
Notes 59
Issued: *September 2012*

Urgent: Southern Pine Beetle Update 3

By John J. Riggins, Forest Entomologist.

The southern pine beetle (*Dendroctonus frontalis*, Fig. 1) continues to have increased impacts on Mississippi forests during the summer and fall of 2012. During late May and throughout June, foresters on the Homochitto National Forest in Southwest Mississippi began reporting a growing number of active SPB spots. During an initial survey flight during early June, more than 80 spots were detected. Most of these spots were on Forest Service land, but a few were on private lands. The Mississippi Forestry Commission is working closely with the U.S.D.A. Forest Service to identify and notify landowners affected by this apparent SPB outbreak.

Another detection flight during late June/early July indicated at least 175 new SPB spots in and around the Homochitto at that time. An aerial detection flight in early August reported over 200 more SPB spots, bringing the total number of infestations in and around the Homochitto to over 500. The most recent aerial detection flight in late August detected another 113 spots, bringing the grand total just before Hurricane Isaac to 624 spots. Hurricane Isaac caused substantial downed timber, flooding, and interrupted SPB salvage operations as it moved through the area, but the District Forest Office was not directly damaged and work should resume quickly. There is no way to know what the effects of the hurricane might be on the SPB outbreak.

Figure 1: The southern pine beetle (Dendroctonus frontalis) is historically the most destructive forest insect pest of Southeastern forests.

Reports from Dr. Jim Meeker, Forest Entomologist with the USDA Forest Service, Forest Health Protection Unit in Pineville, Louisiana reports that many spots on the Homochitto are still very active, but the majority of these spots have been suppressed through cut and leave tactics. However, hundreds of less active spots are still present, though SPB activity and spread seem to be slowing somewhat. State and Federal foresters are continuing to identify and treat spots with cut and leave operations (Fig. 2, next page).

Landowners in Franklin, Amite, Wilkinson, Adams, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Copiah Counties are urged to be diligent and conduct inspections of their lands to determine if SPB activity is present. This publication (http://naldc.nal.usda.gov/download/CAT87208970/PDF) provides a good overview of SPB signs and symptoms. If any

Figure 2: Cut and leave operation on Homochitto National Forest in August 2012.

Figure3: SPB attack densities are very high in some spots, as evidenced by pitch tubes on this tree in Homochitto National Forest on 7/31/2012. Photo

SPB activity is suspected; please contact your local MFC office. Timely salvage or cut and leave operations can dramatically limit total timber losses incurred due to a SPB outbreak, and can limit a landowners liability should the infestation spread to adjacent properties.

Landowners in the rest of the state are also encouraged to pay close attention for SPB activity. No other major outbreaks are known of or anticipated for the rest of the State at this time, although about 14 small SPB spots have been reported on Tombigbee National Forest near Houston, MS. The USDA Forest Service is proceeding with plans to suppress these spots. Forest stakeholders throughout Mississippi should keep a close eye on things as this year progresses.

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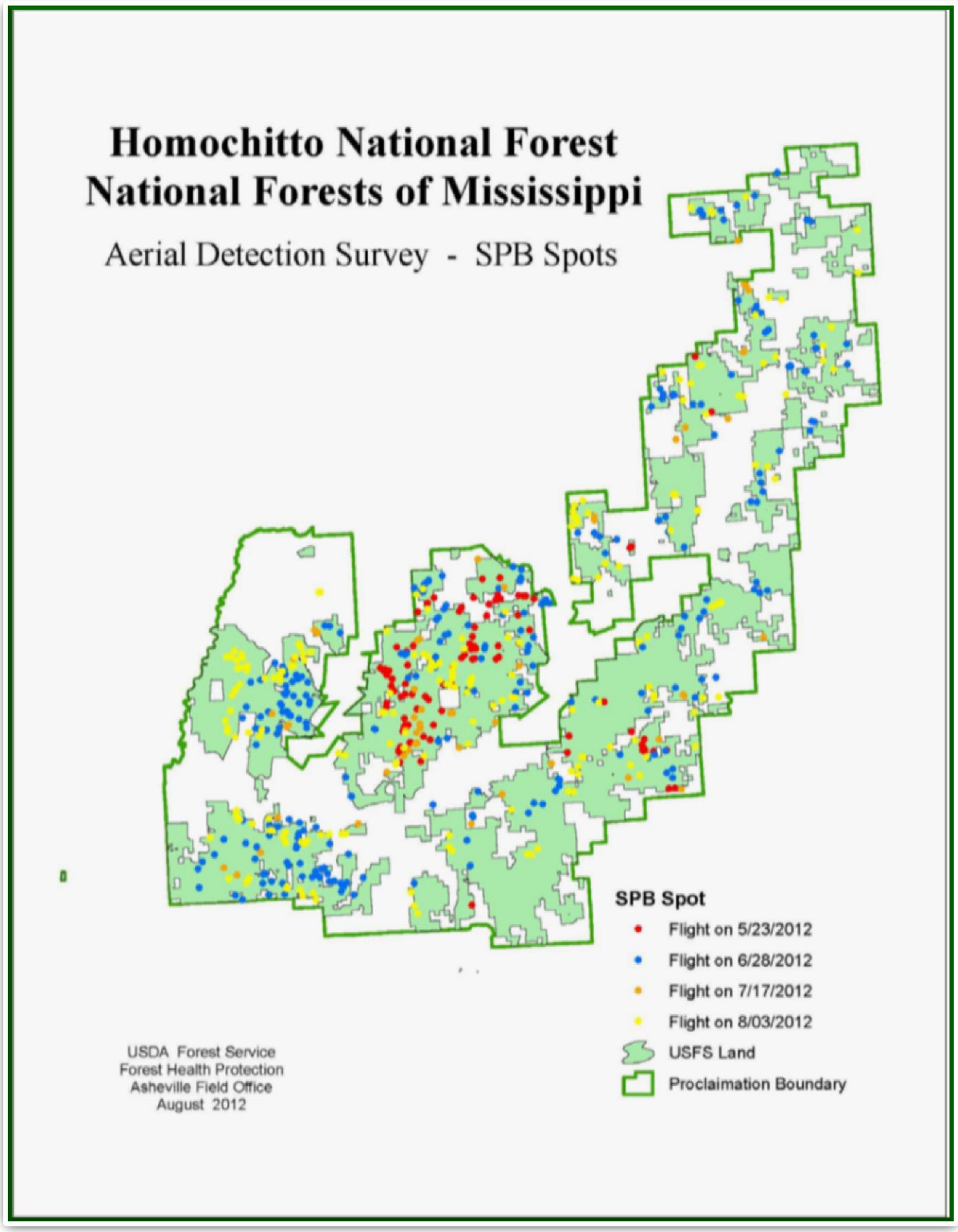
Homochitto National Forest
National Forests of Mississippi
Aerial Detection Survey - SPB Spots
SPB Spot
Flight on 5/23/2012
Flight on 6/28/2012
Flight on 7/17/2012
Flight on 8/03/2012
USFS Land
Proclaimation Boundary
USDA Forest Service
Forest Health Protection
Asheville Field Office
August 2012